CANONS

AND

JNSTITUTIONS

Drawn up and Agreed upon
By the General Assembly or
Meeting of the Heads of the

QVAKERS;

From all Parts of the Kingdom, at their New-Theatre in *Grace-church-street*, in or about January 166$\frac{8}{9}$.

George Fox being their Presidẽt.

London, Printed, *Anno Dom.* 1669.

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AND

INSTITUTIONS

An Introduction.

THere hath been ſome time ſpent in the Inſpection of this *Quakers Synod*: And although all the Particulars of that Days Proceedure cannot be obtained; yet ſo many of them as will render that Party or Sect of men for ever Infamous and Ridiculous with all Intelligent and Obſervant men, is with great difficulty obtained.

They had proceeded unto many other Inſolencies (beſides what they

have laid down in these their Canons and Institutions) in the stating of their Government, had not some of them feared the Magistratical Justice. However the rest shewed their forwardness thereunto, by the Proposals were made to introduce either *A New Scripture* into the world, or *The Old one with many & great Additions*; this was urged once and again from a twofold Topick: the first was, *That many places in the Old Testament did refer to several Books, which as yet were never extant*; and the *Supplement to the New* was insisted upon, by others, who said there was, amongst others, *An Epistle to the Church of Laodicea* to be added to the Canon, and put into the *Revelations*. But it seems these things proved not so

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ripe as they purpoſed; and whether they were rejected, or left for another time, there muſt be new information of; not knowing as yet, if they intend to ſubjoyn the ſaid *Epiſtle to the Church of Laodicea* by way of *Appendix*, or not.

Several *Penances* were done that Day, and performed after a very *carnal* way, however ſtiled by them *The Condemnation and Judgment of the Spirit.*

The *Faults* were various: Some for being too buſie with Women; ſome for diſorder in their *Meetings*, as keeping Hats on when others had them off, or when their *Friends* prayed *&c.* and others for want of *zeal.*

Some credibly report, that before many of them can make their

peace with their *Brethren*, they were forced to bow down themselves, and by a willing subjection put their heads between (their President's for the time being) *George Fox* his Legs, who was President at that Days Solemnity; and whose Name is inserted as Primate and Metropolitan of the rest.

The business of Civil Matters took up a considerable part of their said Days Work; and I cannot learn that they went further than the *Widows Bed* and the *Dead mans grave*. How much the Prerogative Court would take cognizance of that affair, concerning Wills, Testaments and Legacies, is best known to themselves.

But that of *Marriage*, in the way and method by them instituted and ex-

explained, will be of very great concernment to all Widows, Maids and ſingle perſons of the Female ſex (who have not wholly caſt off that Modeſty, Shamefac'dneſs and Baſhfulneſs, which hath ever been eſteemed as their Ornament, Virtue and Grace; whileſt they muſt have a *Jury* of Witneſſes to their firſt *Conjunction*, which their Third Canon makes the *Ratio Formalis* of Marriage;) to look to themſelves; and to conſider whether it would more defile the *hands* of the married perſons that the Miniſter joyns in holy Wedlock, than the *eyes* of theſe 12 Spectators at their firſt *doing* together (as they call it) would.

It may now be ſeaſonably conſidered, how much theſe ſort of men have fallen from their firſt Princi-

ples,

ples, Mode and VVay, by resolving all things thus *formally*; when at first their Religion seemed a Chaos, and Darkness covered the face of their *Deep*, and the very *Ratio Formalis* of their Religion was to cry down *Forms*; which later practise of theirs, if it succeed no better than it hath yet, will undoubtedly break them and their *Forms* also; many of their own Party falling off by reason of it.

That of Doctor *Smith* the Physician, who was convened before one of their *Private Courts*, hath given his eminent dislike of their *way* and *proceedings*, by leaving behind him Ten sheets of paper, fill'd with the many Cheats, Frauds and Insolencies of his *quondam* Brethren the *Quakers*, of whom he had been for four-

fourteen years, by which he had the moſt conſiderable opportunities to look into the *Arcanaes* and Secrets of their Myſtery of Iniquity: And although Fourty pound was propoſed to him in whoſe hands the Manuſcript lay, by ſome of their Party, that the Book might never ſee the light; yet 'tis hoped it will be printed, and be as a ſtanding Teſtimony againſt them, when they and their *Inſtitutions* ſhall evaniſh and come to nothing.

Canons

Canons and *Institutions*

Agreed upon at a

General Meeting

OF THE

QVAKERS.

1669.

Friends fellowſhip muſt be in the ſpirit, and all Friends muſt know one another in the Spirit and power of God.

I. IN all the Meetings of the County, Two or Three being gathered from them to go to the General Meeting, for to give notice one to another, if there be any that walk not in the truth, and have bin convinced, and go from Truth; and ſo diſhonoreth God: that ſome may be Ordered from the Meeting to go to exhort ſuch; and bring into the next General Meeting what they ſay.

II. If any that profeſs the Truth, that follow Pleaſure, Drunkenneſs, Gaming, or is not faithful in their Callings & Dealings, nor honeſt nor juſt; but runneth into Debt, and ſo bringeth a ſcandal upon the Truth: Friends may give notice at the next General Meeting, if there be any ſuch; and ſome may be ordered to go and exhort them, to bring in their Anſwers at the next General Meeting.

III.

III. And if any go disorderly together in Marriage, contrary to the practise of the Holy men of God, and Assembly of the Rightous in all ages, who declared it in the Assemblies of the Rightous when they took one another (all things being clear) and they both being free from any other. And when they do together, and take one another, let there not be less than a dozen friends and Relations present, according to your former order; having first acquainted the Mens Meeting; and they have clearness and unitie with them: And that it may be recorded in a Book, according to Word and Commandment of the Lord: And if any walk contrary to the Truth therin, let some be ordered to speak to them, and give notice thereof to the next General Meeting.

IV. And all that be Widdows (which have children) and do intend to Marry; let Querie be made what she hath done for her Children; if there be no Will made, then let such part of her late Husbands Estate be set out for her children, as is equal according to truth; and what they can do afterwards, let them do also; and where there is a Will made, let those Legacies and Portions

tions be improved and ſecured before Marriage for the Children of the Deceaſed, with what more they can do for them; and then when theſe things are done, let them be recorded in a Book at the next General Meeting.

V. And alſo all Widdows in all your ſeveral Meetings, let them be taken notice of, and informed and incouraged in their outward buſineſs, that there be not an hindrance to them in their inward growth; and ſo carefully look after them, that they may be nouriſhed and cheriſhed and ſo preſerved in the Truth; that Love may be increaſed, and if they have many Children to put out Apprentices or Servants, that may be a burthen to them to bring up; then let Friends take care to eaſe them, by putting them forth as may be meet: Let all this be look'd into by every Meeting, and Notice thereof given to the next General Meeting, and then ſome ordered to ſee that all things are done according to Truth and Righteouſneſs.

VI. And all ſuch as marry by the Prieſts of Baal, who are the rough hands of Eſau, and fiſts of wickedneſs, and bloody hands,

and who have had their hands in the blood of our Brethren, and who are the cauſe of all this baniſhment of our Brethren, and ſpoiled ſo many of their goods, caſting into priſon, and keepeth many hundreds at this day; And ſuch as go to them for wives or husbands, muſt come to Judgment and condemnation of the Spirit, that lead them to Baal and Baals Prieſts, alſo, or elſe friends (that keep their habitations) muſt write againſt them and Baal both: For from Geneſis to the Revelations you never read of any Prieſt that married people: but it is Gods Ordinance, and whom God joyns together, let no man put aſunder: And they took one another in the Aſſembly of the Rightous, when all things were clear: therefore let all thoſe things be enquired into, and brought to the General Meeting, and from thence ſome ordered to go to them and return what they ſay at your next Meeting; and all this before they or any of them be left as heathens, or written againſt: let them be three or four times gone to, that they may have Goſpel order, ſo that if it be poſſible they may come to that which did convince them, to condemn their unrightous doings,

doings, that ſo you may not have a hoof in Egypt.

VII. And alſo ſuch as wear their hats when Friends pray, and are gotten into the old rotten principle of the Ranters, who ſet up the wearing thereof in oppoſition to the power of God, and therein uphold it, which is condemned by it, and the power of God is gone over it and them; who have Ranted from the Truth, and have ſtopped many who were coming into it, that the very world may ſay you are in a confuſion, and divided, and gone from your firſt principle, who ſaid you were of one heart, and one mind, and one ſoul. And therefore that ſpirit muſt be cut off by the ſword of the Spirit of the Lord, that they may come to them which did at firſt convince them: and notice may be given to the General Meeting of all things, and from thence muſt be ordered to go and exhort them, that erre in ſuch things, to come to the firſt principle that did at firſt convince them; that they may come over ſuch things, and Friends muſt ſtand up in the Noble Seed of God to judg the world and all the fallen Angels.

VIII. And in all your Meetings let no-

tice be given to the General Meeting, of all the poor, and when you have heard that there is many more poor belonging to one Meeting than to another, and that Meeting thereby burthened and oppressed; let the rest of the Meetings assist and help them, so that you may ease one another, and help to bear one anothers burthens, and so fulfill the law of Christ, and so see that nothing be lacking, according to the Apostles words, then all is well. For the Jews outward, though they were as the stars of heaven, and as the sand on the sea, yet there was not to be a beggar amongst them, according to the law of God: and amongst Christians in the first Ages, there was a Mens Meeting set up at Jerusalem to see that nothing was lacking, which was the Gospel Order according to the law of the Spirit, and thus continued as long as they lived, in the like power and Spirit of God: But when the Apostates came in, and the true Church fled into the Wilderness, who was to continue there 1260 days, and the Witnesses propheſied in Sack-cloth 1260 days, and the Beast was worshipped just so long 1260 days, and then all things went out of order, every thing was wanting

in the time they worſhipped the Dragon, and the Beaſt and the Devil made the world like a Wilderneſs. But now the Judgment of the Great Whore is come, and of the Beaſt, and with them the Falſe Prophet and the Dragon, who ſhall be caſt alive into the Lake of Fire. And the True Church come up out of the Wilderneſs, and the Manchild which was caught up into Heaven, come down again to Rule all Nations with a Rod of iron; and the Marriage of the Lamb is come, and the Lamb and the Saints ſhall have the Victory. And the everlaſting Goſpel is and ſhall be preached again, as was amongſt the Apoſtles; the Goſpel order ſhall be ſet up, as amongſt them; and a Mens Meeting, as was at the firſt Converſion, to ſee that nothing be lacking in the Church, then all things is well: ſo there is not to be a Beggar (now amongſt the Chriſtians,) according to the Law of Jeſus, as there was not to be any amongſt the Jews by the Law of God.

IX. And alſo all men that hunt after women, from woman to woman; and alſo women whoſe affections run ſometimes after one man, and ſoon after another, and ſo

hold one another in affection, and so draw out the affection of one another, and after a while leave one another, and go one from another, do the same thing: These *Doings* make more like Sodom than Saints, and is not of Gods moving or joyning, then they are to be parted, for Marriage is Gods Ordinance, Gods command, and one to another, and in that they feel the Power of God.

X. And that notice be taken of all evil Speakers, backbiters and slanderers, and foolish talkers, and idle Jesters, for all these things corrupt good manners, and is not according to the Saints and Holy ones, whose words are seasoned with salt, ministring Grace to the hearers.

XI. All such as are Tale-carriers, and Railers, whose work is to sow dissention, are to be reproved and admonished: for such do not bring people into the unity of the Spirit, but by such means do lose their own condition.

XII. And all such as go up and down to cheat, by borrowing and getting of Money of Friends in by-places, and have cheated several; all such are to be stopped, and judged:

judged : as there is a Woman, tall in her perſon, freckled in her face; and alſo one *John Harding*, who are for judgment, and to be condemned.

XIII. If there happen any difference between Friend and Friend, of any matter, if it cannot be ended againſt the next General Meeting, let half a dozen Friends from the General Meeting be ordered to put a ſpeedy end thereto; That Juſtice may be ſpeedily done, that no difference may riſe or remain amongſt any : And let your General Meeting be once in every quarter of a year, and to be appointed at ſuch place, as may be moſt convenient for the moſt of Friends to meet in; ſo the houſe may be cleanſed of all that is contrary to Purity, Virtue, Light, Life and Spirit and Power of God; ſo that Friends may not be one anothers ſorrows and troubles, but one anothers Joy and Crown in the Lord.

XIV. And all Friends ſee that your children be trained up in the fear of the Lord, in Soberneſs and Holineſs, Righteouſneſs and Temperance, Meekneſs and Gentleneſs and Lowlines and Modeſty in apparel and carriage; and ſee to exhort your Children and

Family, and teach your Children when they are young, then will they remember when they are old, according to Solomon, and so they may be a Blessing to you, and not a Curse.

XV. And that Friends do buy convenient burying places, as Abraham did, who bought a place to bury his dead, and would not bury them amongst the Egyptians and Canaanites; and Jacob was brought out of Egypt, and Joseph and they were buried in their Grandfathers and great Grandfathers burying place. And so Friends to buy decent burying places for your Meetings, and to keep out the Spirit of the Sodomites and Egyptians and Canaanites, that corrupt the earth, and let them be decently and well fenced, that you may condemn all the world in all things.

XVI. And also that Friends buy convenient Books for Registring the Births and Marriages and Burials, as the Holy men of God did of old, as you may read through the Scripture; that every one may be ready to give Testimony and Certificate thereof, if need requires, or any be called thereunto.

XVII.

XVII. And alſo that all the Sufferings of Friends, and all kind of Sufferings of Friends in all the Counties be gathered up & put together, & ſent to the General Meeting, & ſo ſent to *London* to *Ellis Hooks*, that nothing of the Memorial of the blood and cruel Sufferings of your Brethren be loſt, which may ſtand as a Teſtimony againſt the Murdering Spirits of the World: and be it to the praiſe of the Lords everlaſting Power of the Lord in the Ages to come, who ſupported his, and upheld his in ſuch Hardſhips and Cruelty, who is God over all bleſſed for ever, Amen.

XVIII. And let enquiry be made concerning all ſuch that pay Tithes, which make void the Teſtimony and Suffering of all our Brethren, who have ſuffered many of them to death, by which many Widows and Fatherleſs have been made, which is contrary to the Doctrine of the Apoſtles, and the Doctrine of the Martyrs, and contrary to the Doctrine of the Righteous in this preſent Age. All ſuch are to be enquired into, and to be exhorted.

XIX. And let Query be made concerning all Priſoners that are poor, that they

may

may be Relieved, and ſo encouraged in their ſufferings; and alſo that care be taken for their Wives and Families, that they do not ſuffer for want of ſupply, and outward things; and let enquiry be made how many there are in all your ſeveral Counties. Let diligent Enquiry be made into all theſe things, at every Meeting, and at every Quarter Meeting is to take care accordingly.

G. F.

Dear Friends:

Be faithful in the ſervice of God, & mind the Lords buſineſs; be diligent, & bring the power of the Lord over all thoſe that have gainſaid it; & all you that be faithful, go to viſit them all that have been convinced, from houſe to houſe, that if it be poſſible you may not leave a hoof in Egypt; and ſo every one go ſeek the loſt ſheep, and bring him home on your back to the Fold, and there will be more joy of that one ſheep, than of the Ninety nine in the fold. G. F.

Copies of this to be ſent abroad amongſt Friends at their Meetings.

ALl Friends every where who are gathered in the Name of *Jeſus Chriſt*, keep your Meetings as you did in the begining, betwixt the 10. and 11. hours, when the Prieſt is in the heat of his Worſhip, and ſo all you, be in your Meetings feeding on the bread of Life, when the Prieſt and his Company are in his and their Diſhes and Pleaſures; and

and you then to break your Meetings, as you feel the Power to order you, about the third or fourth hours, when the Prieſt is in the heat of his Worſhip, and ſo you may go when he is in his heat, and ſits over his diſhes, and go away in his heat; and this was the practiſe of Friends in the begining: therefore do you continue in it. Keep your Meetings on the Firſt day, and your weekly Meetings in the Name of *Jeſus* that never changeth.

And Friends all take heed

of

of ſleeping in Meetings, and ſottiſhneſs and dullneſs; for it is an illſavory thing to ſee one ſit nodding in a Meeting, and ſo to loſe the ſenſe of the Lord & ſhamefacdneſs both; and it grieveth the Upright and watchful, that wait upon the Lord, to ſee ſuch things; and for the Prieſts, people and others that come into your Meetings, to ſee you that come together to worſhip God and wait upon Him, to have Fellowſhip in His Spirit, for you to ſit nodding is a ſhame and unſeemly thing. Therefore

fore be careful and watchful, and let it be amended, and mind the light and power of God, *Christ Jesus* in you, and that will condemn all such things, and lead you out and above all such things, and make you watchful over one another for good.

Let this be read in all your Meetings.

G. F.

FINIS.